

light breeze and a light swell, the bird approaching us from the south-west. It proceeded to the lee of Breaksea Island where it made several swoops down at the water close to the edge of the rocks. It then flew back out to sea, passing 200 yards ahead of the *Warreen*, the pink tail feathers being easily seen by several of the interested members of the crew.

—N. E. STEWART, Cottesloe.

Records of the Smoker Parrot.—On May 29, 1951, I observed a flock of about 15 Smoker Parrots (*Polytelis anthopeplus*) in a roadside eucalypt nearly a mile from Chidlow townsite. They remained quietly in the lower branches of the tree and permitted of close observation. Chidlow is well within the jarrah forest block, an area not usually frequented by this parrot.

—L. SEDGWICK, Wooroloo.

At the end of May while working on my holding I was surprised to see a flock of these birds settle in a blue gum tree. As far as I was able to count there were 20 or more of them. A colony of Magpies dispersed the parrots and upset the count.

—T. B. DELAPORTE, Maddington.

On August 14, on the Northam road, 4 miles west of the Wundowie turn-off, two Smokers were seen feeding on spilled wheat at the roadside in company with two Common Bronzewings. A little further on 4 Twenty-eight Parrots were feeding similarly.

—D. L. SERVENTY, Nedlands.

Food Transference by Pallid Cuckoos.—On August, 14, 1951, about 1630 hours, we encountered three or four Pallid Cuckoos (*Cuculus pallidus*) in part-cleared country by Wooroloo Brook. Two of these were kept under observation for perhaps 20 minutes. One bird flew down to the ground from an elevated perch calling "Peep-peep-peep" and proeured a long hairy caterpillar. It then flew to a blackboy (*Xanthorrhoea*) inflorescence about 50 yards away and elung sideways to the spike for a short time before flying to a dead tree and presenting the caterpillar to a bird which shortly afterwards uttered a harsh grating "Tweet." This bird was apparently the female of a pair.

The male then flew to some distance and, after a pause, again uttered the "Peep-peep-peep" call. The female flew to meet the male on a blackboy spike and was presented with a large hairy caterpillar. Flying to a dead tree, the female ate the caterpillar while the male flew off and resumed the "Peep-peep-peep" call after an interval.

When the male again flew towards the female, she descended a few feet in the tree to meet him and received a small striped hairy grub. The male then flew away and after a time resumed the "Peep-peep-peep" call. It flew, hovered, pounced on a caterpillar, and flying to a bush, still calling, ate the caterpillar.

We then lost sight of one of the birds and broke off observations.

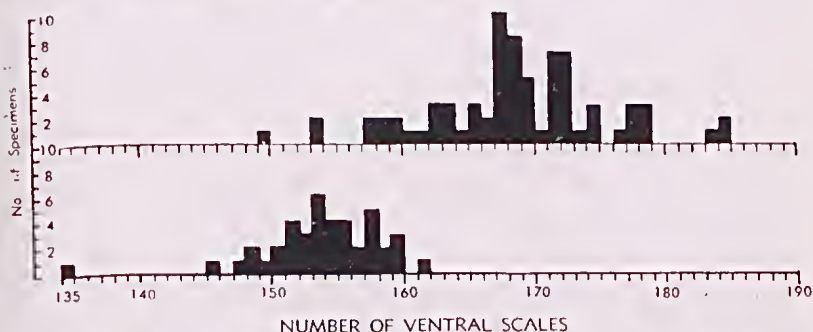
E.H.S. examined the supposed female through binoculars. In his opinion the bird was adult, a view supported to some extent by the comparatively early date. This bird had an unusually conspicuous white nuchal patch, otherwise the plumage was of the normal female type. The second bird was viewed closely by L.E.S. only and was considered comparatively uniform in coloration.

We suggest that what we saw was courtship feeding. E. A. Armstrong, *Bird Display*, quotes two cases of courtship feeding by extra-regional cuckoos.

—E. H. and L. E. SEDGWICK, Woorloo.

A Note on the Western Tiger Snake.—In his paper, "The South Australian Reptile Fauna, Part 1 Ophidia" (*Rec. S.A. Mus.*, vol. ix, 1951, p. 554) Mr. F. J. Mitchell casts doubt upon the validity of my *Notechis scutatus occidentalis*, first described in vol. 1, no. 7, p. 139 of this journal. In the course of his remarks the author states, "a survey of the variation listed . . . indicates the body scale counts to be very variable and therefore of little diagnostic value."

Taking it for granted that Kinghorn's figures in his *Snakes of Australia* are incorrect, which seems more than probable, there does exist a definite difference between the numbers of ventrals of eastern and western forms. An examination of all records available to me comprising 112 specimens, of which 42 are Western Australian, gives the result shown in the figure below (upper graph, Eastern Australia; lower, Western Australia).



It will be seen that only one of the western snakes has more than 160 ventrals (162) and that but 7 of the others have less than 160. One of these, the one with 150, in the British Museum, may have come from this State though registered "Australia." The others are two each with 154, 158 and 159, which may also be Western Australian.

It is evident that a difference exists which cannot be lightly ignored. Coloration is admittedly unsatisfactory but one cannot fail to remark that not a single western specimen in the collection of the W.A. Museum shows the colours or the patterns of the eastern specimen in the collection or as shown in the illustrations of Kinghorn, McCoy and Krefft, or described by them.